



Science



BACK TO SCHOOL SCIENCE

Make Your Own Rain Forest



Do you know what a tropical rain forest is? A tropical rain forest is a place where plants grow well, because there is so much rain. The trees, shrubs, and other plants absorb water from the ground. The water travels through the plants and is released into the air as water vapor through very small openings in the surface of stems and leaves. The water molecules in the air gather to form rain clouds. The rain falls and the cycle begins again.

In this way, rain forests produce their own rain. Sometimes when a rain forest is cut down, there is so little rain that the area will suffer drought – and few plants will grow.

Learning about rain forests can be very interesting.

You can make your own rain forest and share it with your friends.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- a big, large-mouth jar with a tight lid (Restaurants and cafeterias often buy foods in half-gallon or gallon-sized jars and will be happy to give one to you if you explain what you are going to do.)
- gravel ● soil ● a table knife or long screwdriver to help you in planting
- small plants (You might be able to find some around your neighborhood, depending on where you live. Look in damp corners and along walls.)

If not, go to a nursery that sells house plants and tell them you want some inexpensive, damp-loving plants.

WHAT YOU DO:

- Place about two inches of gravel in the bottom of the jar.
- Place about two inches of soil on top of the gravel.
- Using the knife, make holes in the soil for the plants. Leave space between the holes to give the plants room to grow. Carefully place the roots of the plants into the holes and, using the knife, push the soil back into the hole around the roots of the plants. Using the handle of the knife, lightly pack the soil around the roots. You may have to use a couple of long, thin sticks or a ruler to do this.
- Carefully pour in water until the soil is thoroughly wet.
- Leave the lid off the jar for two or three days, then place the lid on.
- Remove the lid for one hour once a week.

Prepare a short two-minute talk about rainforests. Get help from an adult if you need to. Explain to your teacher that you would like to show the class your Rainforest Jar and give a short talk. And say that you would like to bring the jar back in two months and show the class how the plants have grown.

Take a photograph of the jar once each week, so you have a picture record of your Rainforest. If you know anyone who has a digital camera, have him or her help you take pictures. You can also buy an inexpensive camera for use only for this project. This kind of camera is thrown away when the pictures are developed.

RAINFOREST IN A JAR

Water vapor is released into the air.

The water vapor collects on the sides of the jar and runs back to the soil.

Water travels up the stems to the leaves.



Plant roots absorb water from the soil.

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